



Tamiya magazine builds Imai's 1:350 scale 'Thunderbird 2'

Those who are old enough to cast their minds back to the sixties and early seventies will remember the first screenings of the Gerry Anderson's "SuperMarionation" action/adventure programs - Thunderbirds

of course! For the first time there was an accessible and exciting new format that promised Hi-Tech (in those days) and high drama, all in less than one hour.

Wooden acting

The SuperMarionation technique used the now familiar "wooden" puppet actors, with their somewhat shaky movement and bushy eyebrows, and won over a whole generation of children and adults alike. The style of production has been copied by advertisement agencies and comedians, giving testament to the lasting popularity of the programs.

The "actors" certainly gave an

interesting characterization to the series, but the real stars were the fantastic mechanical creations, the Thunderbirds themselves. Like the space vehicles in the classic Star Wars Trilogy, the hardware designs were completely original, from the main pieces of machinery, right down to the small service vehicles seen whizzing around the airports and other installations.

The model designers and builders didn't copy the conventional sleek bodied aluminium flying ashtrays space ships of the 1950s - they developed chunky, believable machines with signs of the heavy use resulting from dangerous situations in which the crews inevitably found

themselves.

Thunderbirds 1 and 3 were the sleek "fast movers" that could reach an incident within minutes, and the subject of this feature, Thunderbird 2 was the work horse of the organization.

It was not as fast as the other two, but could shift vast quantities of equipment in its interchangeable pods.

The model

Model kits exist of just about every piece of Thunderbird related hardware, so the real question the modeller has to ask him/her self is which one to build first?

Imai are responsible for many of



NO STRINGS ATTACHED!

MODELSPEC

IMAI 1:350 SCALE THUNDERBIRD 2 SPECIAL

Materials;

Injection moulded polystyrene throughout. Waterslide and self adhesive decals provided.

Paints used;

Tamiya Acrylics Nos. X2B Park Green, X1 Gloss Black, X7 Gloss Red, X11 Chrome Silver, XF20 Medium Grey, XF7 Flat Red, XF3 Flat Yellow.

General;

Accurate kit of a very popular subject – not too difficult for the non-modeller to build, and has scope for superdetailing for the serious Thunderbirds fans.

the "TB" kits, so it was their 1:350 scale TB2 "Special" that we decide to build.

The kit is quite simple in construction, following a logical sequence of assembly. A cockpit interior is provided, and considering the tiny scale, the detail is very good. Mid grey was used for the floor and bulkhead, with the seat pads touched in with matt red later on.

Self adhesive decals are provided for the cockpit instrumentation - it helps here to cut the single large decal into separate panels and apply them one by one.

The main "airframe" comes in upper and lower halves that when brought together will need a little

filling and sanding to remove the join line. It is advisable to test fit all components before final gluing, as with all models. Several deviations were made from the instructions, the first one being at stage two. This describes the assembly of the horizontal tail mounted engine unit.

The front intake and rear exhaust panels were painted first, and put to one side. These can then be slotted in easily at a later stage obviating the need for masking.

The instructions also indicate the painting of the yellow band that runs around the body just aft of the cockpit prior to attaching this to the main body. Due to the filling needed here, it is advisable to assemble the airframe completely

before any painting.

The equipment pod is removable, and has a flip down door/ramp enabling the bizarre and highly specialised vehicles to roll out and do their job. If you intend to incorporate this moving feature in your model, don't forget to paint the interior prior to assembly.

Utility legs with separate feet are included in the kit, non-telescoping unfortunately, but they do have tight push fits into the underside of the machine so it can be displayed in mid-pod change.

The green colour of our Thunderbird 2 was achieved by mixing approximately 80% gloss green with 20% gloss black - a gloss finish because of the

waterslide decals to follow. This mix is quite dark, but the weathering treatment lightens it considerably. The decals were applied, and sealed in with a light overspray of matt varnish, although in retrospect, a satin finish might have been more appropriate at this scale. Weathering was then undertaken using very light air/drybrushing of dusty colours using photographs and video footage as reference.

Overall, a straightforward model to build and paint, and one which is brought to life with a little (subtle) weathering. For fans of Thunderbirds (surely everybody?) it's a must, taking its place alongside the other wonderful machines from the studios of Gerry Anderson.